

THE BURIED LIFE:
THEMES OF ALIENATION AND SELF-DISCOVERY
IN THE POETRY OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

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P. 80

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction.	iii
I. The Victorian Zeitgeist	1
II. The Divided Self: A Central Stream.	7
A. Isolation and the "Buried Life"	14
B. The Estranging Sea.	23
III. Conflict of Consciousness: A Spiritual Crisis	32
A. Quest for Truth	37
B. Retreat of Faith.	48
IV. The Divided Self Reconciled	61
Conclusion.	73

INTRODUCTION

Matthew Arnold was a 'philosopher-king' who sought to forge an ideal society from the social, political and moral chaos accompanying that progress which was the romantic legacy of the Victorian Age. Despite the power of knowledge, expanding democracy, wealth, and emerging social consciousness, despair, uncertainty, and injustice prevailed. Political conflict accompanied the thrust towards social reform in the wake of the French Revolution; dehumanization and exploitation awaited the masses who sought the fruits of industrialism in England's cities; the new science ignited spiritual disenchantment, despite its new-found, questioning truths. It was a paradoxical age, boasting of historical privilege, yet revealing human want and spiritual poverty. One of its near casualties was Matthew Arnold, an island of humanistic idealism afloat in a sea of spiritual apprehensiveness. He waged a relentless battle against the personal havoc being wrought by the new age.

As Lionel Trilling observes, "Arnold had a sense of that which was forced underground into silence," a sense of man's buried life. During the Victorian period dominant social

forces contributed to the submergence of self. The new science of evolution threatened religious faith; materialism and wealth produced frustration; the clamor for freedom and equality bred egotism and social tension. In an age of growth and development, of hope and opportunity unparalleled in history, man yet despaired. It is this "strange disease of modern life," characterized by doubt, isolation, loneliness, ennui, and self-fragmentation, and precipitated by the epoch-making currents of the mid-Victorian period, which is the concern of this research.

Matthew Arnold's poetry chronicles the retreat of the self into a protective state of spiritual hibernation. In the metaphor of the buried life Arnold developed an aesthetic tool to articulate this condition of being. The figure represents the true essence of self, embracing the spiritual, moral, and social values we hold — all the factors that comprise the total individual. Arnold employs the device to dramatize the impact of the *Zeitgeist* on the psyche of man as well as to define the nature of being.

Implicit in the buried life concept is the posture of the individual in relation to time and Nature. Arnold's idea of self is far-reaching. To convey the mutable and organic quality of the buried life, he employs a companion figure, the river of life or sea of time image. Additional materials of the motif grow out of landscape symbology,

nature imagey, antithetical characterization, and philosophical dialogue.

A configuration of poems, central to which is the "Buried Life," explores the multiple implications of the buried life. These include the Marguerite series, "Dover Beach," "Empedocles on Etna," "Human Life," and "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse." That allusions to the central self appear in numerous other poems by Arnold suggests its prevalence in his thought. The river imagery acts as a conveyor for the buried life idea, giving it necessary mobility. It recurs throughout the poetry, a fact which offers further evidence of Arnold's ideological cohesiveness and his emphasis on the centrality of the buried stream within our being.

Essentially this study seeks to identify, appraise, analyze, and explicate the buried life concept as it exists in Arnold's poetry; to confirm its dominance in Arnold's social, literary, and philosophical thinking; and to illustrate wherein the buried life idea is applicable to the theories of self later expounded in Arnold's social criticism. My analysis of the buried life problem proceeds along a continuum from its identification in the poetry to its resolution in Culture and Anarchy. As the tenor of the times is fundamental to this study, we now look more closely at the Victorian Zeitgeist.

CHAPTER I

THE VICTORIAN ZEITGEIST: CLIMATE OF UNREST AND CHANGE

Historians and philosophers alike confirm and are in accord that the Nineteenth Century was an advancing age. The idea of progress as an historical ideal finds its ultimate expression in the social, political, and intellectual transformations symbolized in the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867. These milestones set the Victorian era on a forward-moving course from a traditional society into an expanding, modern one.

The spirit of reform possessed inherent optimism regarding the changing social structure thought to be endowing the masses with political representation and, theoretically, to be creating a new humanity. It began in the late Eighteenth Century to set the stage for the tides of change that would transform English society from its feudal traditions into a democracy. In this reforming vein, certain key elements are significant. The Foxites, reasons Trevelyan, in their advocacy of Parliamentary Reform, and achievement of the 1792 Bill abolishing the rotten boroughs,

paved the way for the Reform Bill of 1832.¹ Already in the 1820's there had been the enactment of corn laws (to protect farmers), the repeal of the income tax in a tight economic climate, and a gain in regard for public opinion.² The 1832 achievement signaled a new era. It was followed by the abolition of slavery in 1833, regulation of child labor, and a Chartist movement challenging "un-regulated industrial growth which subordinated human to commercial interests." The trend of reform prevailed into the mid-Victorian period, with the Reform Bill of 1867 and the accession to power of the English liberals in 1868.³

With advancing political reform, there emerged an economically powerful, socially conscious, influential middle class. In the social tract Culture and Anarchy, Arnold labeled them Philistines for their worship of materialism and supercilious nature. A pawn, more or less, of the new rich was the working class which, despite its

¹ George M. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century and After (1782-1919), (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1962), p. 69.

² Albert Baugh, A Literary History of England, Vol. V (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), p. 1120.

³ Ibid., p. 1281-1283.

enfranchisement through reform, remained excluded from power and abused by industrial magnates. The resulting differences between the two classes created friction, in varying degrees, as well as open rebellion.⁴ Arnold analyzes the conflicts between laborer and bourgeois in his political essay "Democracy," a detailed treatment of the implications of equality and freedom in a democratic society pointing to the importance of education as a factor in achieving social stability. The incongruity between the classes re-enforced hostility, engendered isolation, and fostered a climate of unrest.

England's Industrial Revolution, with its attendant political and social consequences, was not the lone force directing the movement of the Victorian era. Nineteenth-Century evolutionary science, in its challenge to the orthodox Christian faith (to be discussed in a later chapter), created a crisis of moral and intellectual authority. "The thrust of Darwinian evolution called into question the Newtonian theories of the preceding age which suggested that creation was a fixed mechanism destined to run its course until judgement."⁵ Extremist applications of Darwinism,

⁴ Ibid., p. 1284.

⁵ David C. Somervell, English Thought in the Nineteenth Century (London: Methuen & Company, Ltd., 1929), p. 125.

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which confused evolution with progress and faith with rationalism, were considered anti-religions and thus enemies of Christianity.⁶ Victorians expressed their apprehensions by questioning the Church, Biblical authority, ethics, and man's view of his origins. A once-secure faith now undermined, the result was a sense of alienation and despair.

Religious questioning and the quest for a new truth, in ideologies such as agnosticism, became a major factor in the modern spirit initiated by that new freedom produced by the French Revolution. While the changes which modernism wrought were freeing men from the senseless bondage from the past, asserts Gaylord LeRoy in his study of the period, "the modern spirit threatened to create a leveled and vulgarized society, releasing the destructive impulses of the 'mob' and producing a state of anarchy." (Arnold's fears precisely.) Nonetheless, LeRoy continues, "Arnold accepted the creative potential of the modern spirit but looked on its menace with dismay."⁷

The forces, then, of science, industrialism, and

⁶ Ibid., p. 132.

⁷ Gaylord C. LeRoy, Perplexed Prophets -- Six Nineteenth Century Authors (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), p. 64.

political reform, in their complexity, occasioned the crisis of self seen in the submergence of the true self during the Victorian period and detailed in Arnold's poetry. They contributed to the uncertainty, alienation, and doubt fragmenting the identities of Arnold's personae and causing them to seek refuge by flight into the past, withdrawal into the self, or resignation.

Subjectivity is not original with the Victorian Age. Romanticism is noted for displaying the pageantry of a "Byronic bleeding heart." Wordsworth's Prelude was a philosophical study of the evolution of the poet's mind. There was, then, a precedent for analysis of self, a heritage Arnold extends somewhat in the dialogue of the mind with self throughout his "Empedocles on Etna." Romantic self-study, as egotistic display of a poet's emotionality, Arnold opposed. He is, however, a part of, indeed a transmitter of, a tradition of self-examination which extends into the twentieth century. Arnold plumbed the depths of the soul to discern its true nature and formulate a truth by which to conduct life. This humanistic ideal is to be achieved through self-perception found in the pursuit of sweetness and light. Like Goethe, Arnold's delving into the self derives from and applies to his criticism of the external social world.

As Matthew Arnold moves from the halls of Rugby and its strict intellectual discipline in the classical tradition to becoming a published poet, an Oxford professor, an inspector of English schools,⁸ and ultimately the Czar of Nineteenth Century literary criticism, his own life patterns after the philosophy he expounds poetically in response to the Victorian Zeitgeist. All the while caught up in the period's debate in religion and politics and education, Arnold, too, was undergoing and triumphing over a crisis of the self. Like the character of "Stanzas" and the Victorian period itself, he was "wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born . . ."⁹

⁸ An education in the realities of the English working class's plight.

⁹ C.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry, The Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold (London: Oxford University Press, 1950). The edition hereafter cited in the text.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVIDED SELF

"A sense of isolation and loneliness is endemic to life. Its expression in modern literature amounts to an existential loneliness, poignantly new,"¹⁰ writes G. Robert Stange in his study of Matthew Arnold's humanism. Indeed, Arnold is among the precursors of contemporary existentialism through his concern with being and existence in a society increasingly dehumanized. The social-political climate of free enterprise, democracy and laissez-faire economics which emerged in the Victorian era enfranchised the masses but thwarted their full participation in the system, a single condition which exemplifies the incongruities of Victorianism, producing the sense of futility evident in Arnold's poetry. Stange interprets the period's spiritual condition accurately:

Along with release and even apotheosis of the individual, came his alienation; the will to celebrate the self, to make it an object of intense awareness,

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G. Robert Stange, Matthew Arnold: The Poet as Humanist (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 167.

freed man to new forms of joy and to a widened range of suffering.¹¹

In a letter to his friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, Arnold telescopes the conditions of the Victorian Age and his repulsion towards the Zeitgeist, betraying his own crisis and yet asserting a resolve to persevere in the midst of a disintegrating moral environment. He writes:

My dearest Clough these are damned times — everything is against one — the height to which knowledge is come, the spread of luxury, our physical enervation, the absence of great natures, the unavoidable contact of millions of small ones, newspapers, cities, light profligate friends, moral desperados like Carlyle, our own selves, and the sickening consciousness of our difficulties: but for God's sake let me — us neither be fanatics nor yet chaff blown by the wind but let us be as the prudent man would define us and not as anyone else would define us...¹²

This statement not only synthesizes the social conditions of the Victorian Age, but also pinpoints the concerns which occupy Arnold's poetry: the threat to moral earnestness by the materialism of the period, the insincerity and isolation between men, as well as the denial or abandonment of one's own nature. Implications here indicate Arnold's resolve to become a stoic missionary, purging the ills of Victorian

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Letters to Arthur Clough, ed. by H.F. Lowry (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), p. 111, hereafter referred to as Letters to Clough.

humanity, and so vindicate the buried life.

Arnold experienced both the joy and the suffering of a Victorian participant in the dialogue of the times. Through the indoctrination of his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, he developed a keen sense of history and expostulated a theory of culture dealing with the interrelation between the individual and the trends of social history, a dominant element of which was the best self, both collective and individual. He theorized that the most desirable society evolved from the productivity evident in the collective pursuit of intellectual and moral perfection in a classless society. To the degree that the individual is free to pursue this perfection, the external community will profit in the displaying of its collective best self. This is the basic argument of Culture and Anarchy. The incongruities in the expression of freedom in the newly democratized Victorian period and the condition achieved through education, so necessary to this statement, suggests to Arnold that the best self has gone underground into subconsciousness, while the conscious self occupies itself with the dictates, pressures and conformities of materialistic progress and evolution.

Arnold's buried life metaphor defines the spiritual core of the soul and identifies the outcome of man's response

to his external environment. The idea possesses negative-positive qualities contingent upon the spiritual and moral condition of the Victorian Zeitgeist and the individual's perceptive powers. It points up both the hope and despair which occupied Victorian consciousness. Arnold employs the buried life figuratively, in combination with the river of life imagery, to deal with the subordination of self "endemic" to Victorianism. "In a configuration of poems, of which 'The Buried Life' is central,"¹³ the idea of the submerged, true self finds expression. In the poems the figure of a flowing river represents the authentic "central stream" of being. Its submergence results from the defense mechanism of conformity, and reveals man's oblivion of its existence. This passage from "The Buried Life" further elucidates these conclusions:

Fate, which foresaw
 How frivolous a baby man would be —
 That it might keep from his capricious play
 His genuine self, and force him to obey
 Even in his own despite his being's law,
 Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
 The unregarded river of our life
 Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
 And that we would not see
 The buried stream, and seem to be
 Eddying at large in blind uncertainty
 Though driving on with it eternally

11.30-31

11.35-44

The poem is a crystalline interpretation of Arnold's total buried life concept. The above passage structures the buried life motif as it attempts to deal with the self as an historical entity. Assertions here are essential to later poetic treatments of the theory.

"Human Life," another poem in the constellation, uses the river or sea imagery to articulate Arnold's philosophical and spiritual views regarding the conduct of life. The poem compares man's direction in life to vessels sailing on life's incognizable sea. Each life is unique, with a special course to follow, but lacks total comprehension of the onward thrust. The implication is that man has a social responsibility which may supersede his personal heeding. The poem, then, evidences the division or duality of self concomitant with the buried life. Whether man is master or slave is the question. Hence there develops a conflict of consciousness from such mixed allegiances; though man is aware of his personal commitment to the buried life, he yet is caught in the pressures of the universe. The plea is for a heeding of the inner-self: "Man cannot, though he would, live chance's fool."

Arnold opens "Human Life" with a question about the fortuitousness of man's life:

What mortal when he saw
Life's voyage done, his heavenly friend,

Could ever yet dare tell him fearlessly:
 "I have kept uninfringed my nature's law;
 The inly-written chart thou gavest me,
 To guide me, I have steered by to the end'?"

11.1-6

In a pessimistic note the poet questions the possibility of man's adhering to the buried life. Implications are that we do deviate, and hence are fragmented personalities.

Constructing this image of man in the universe, Arnold alludes to an unknown power which has endowed man with a true nature. Having posed a hypothetical situation which establishes the existence of a true self, Arnold proceeds to comment on man as a social entity who is susceptible to digression from his charted course. He establishes, then, the other self's reality, and lays ground for the potential conflict of consciousness presented in later poems. The poet recognizes that man is a social animal, subject to exterior influences:

Ay, We would each fain drive
 At random, and not steer by rule.
 Weakness! and worse weakness
 bestowed in vain.

11.13-15

As we advance through life, Arnold reasons, we often deviate from the directives bestowed upon us by higher, unknown powers.

"Human Life" provides evidence of a knowledge of the buried life in the metaphor of the voyage on the sea of life,

with man unable to discover his "inly-written chart,"¹⁴ motivated by the necessity to continue life's journey with near-Stoic resolve, realizing that the attainment of his goal is never certain.¹⁵ Its conclusion implies further a dual self, one determined by creation, the other directed by external reality.

The stream image, the metaphor of history as a voyage, the recognition of external powers of destiny— here are the ingredients of Arnold's buried life concept. They define the buried life in terms of the outer self, and secure it with a concrete figure of the chart. Arnold related the buried life to practical experience by cloaking the idea in concrete constructions. Therefore the sea imagery, viewed in terms of life, defines the movement of human experience. The mobility of the voyage's progressing onward toward eternity imbues the theory of being with an historical dimension. Finally, cosmological aspects of the image of self evolve from references to 'heavenly friend' and 'unknown powers.' In psychological terms, human nature is a

¹⁴ Masao Miyoshi, The Divided Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians (New York: New York University Press, 1969), P. 192.

¹⁵ Ibid.

basic component of the buried life, seen in this poem's treatment of the psyche's response to the impinging external social forces.

Evidence of the duality of self implicit here emerges from contrasts between the buried stream and the strayed course of man's actual life. The combination of the external forces of society with a weakened spiritual fortitude produces a fragmented self in which man's true identity has been submerged in his sub-conscious mind. Two of Arnold's poems in the buried life cluster treat these social implications. Again, they depart from the premise of Arnold's concern with the moral and social features of the Victorian Zeitgeist, as they attack the conscious self and disrupt the harmonious balance of the psyche. "The Buried Life" and certain lyrics in the Switzerland series illustrate the conflict of self with the forces of the period and dramatize the final "appeal to the innermost recesses of being as an ultimate refuge against the frivolous solicitations of the external world."¹⁶

Isolation imposed by society, as E.D.H. Johnson's estimation of the self concept suggests, accepted by the self, is the primary consideration of "The Buried Life."

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E.D.H. Johnson, The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry, Princeton Studies in English No. 34, (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1963), pp. 149-150.

From this perspective, Arnold also deals with the matter of honesty among men. The speaker observes that the complexity of life often caused men to erect shells or facades of existence both as barriers to and defenses against outer pressures. The result of this conformity, concludes the speaker, is the loss of the true self and assumption of a false being. Quasi-permanent, this state can only be penetrated in rare moments of total truth such as that experienced between lovers — an additional element of the buried life idea. In this moment of self-discovery, the speaker of "The Buried Life" theorizes, we encounter our true selves, those sources whence we come, and our destinies. The challenge to us is to heed the "deep recesses of our breast."

Another dimension to the rationale for the submergence of self lies in the suggestion of an inability to communicate from a position of truth, to be open in expression and interaction, without fear of reprisal. This further supports the contention that suppression of the self results from social conditioning. A rare moment of joy comes at the point of deep visual and spiritual communication. As this overview implies, the buried life concept is multidimensional.

At the outset of "The Buried Life" the speaker is disconsolate at the superficial, depthless quality of communica-

tion between himself and his loved one. "Light flows our war of mocking words....," he muses. Even in discord there appears no substance. He continues from this recognition to express a desire to quell the unrest within his soul, speaking to his companion:

Turn those limpid eyes on mine
And let me read there, love! Thy inmost soul.

11.10-11

Moving forward, the speaker discovers the intrusion of the outer world on the honesty of his relation with his companion. He accepts the fact that man on a social level subordinates self to the demands of exterior experience:

I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with
 blame reproved;
I knew they lived and moved
Tricked in disguise, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves -- and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast!

11.16-23

Indicative of the isolation produced by social conformity is the message of this passage. This knowledge is especially applicable to the Victorian age and its outer directives of the protocol in the struggle for status and social prestige, the desire to acquire and the worship of action and freedom for their own sakes -- these motives are skillfully attacked by Arnold in Culture and Anarchy.

In the final analysis, men possess a common humanity.

Shifting its focus back upon the lovers, "The Buried Life" reveals that barriers to honest communication exist on this very primary level of humanness:

But we, my love, doth a like
 spell benumb
 Our hearts, our voices? -- must we
 too be dumb?

11. 24-25

The lexicon of this stanza crystallizes the image of non-communication, spiritual muteness, and silence in the emphatic quality of 'benumb' and 'dumb'. They express both a physical and mental state. Speaking paradoxically in silent tones, the lovers ultimately recognize a need to "get free our hearts, and have our lips unchain'd." "The Buried Life" is as much a statement as it is an experience in the theory it describes. Its final implication is that all existence is nullified when one's true self is suppressed, silenced. Through analysis it can, however, be retrieved.

Let us further examine the structure of the poem. The speaker believes that the genuine self was indeed concealed purposely in the course of man's creation, based on the make-up of his nature. It is at this point that the figure of the self is introduced in the river of life imagery, signifying the organic, all-pervasive quality of the true self:

Fate...
 Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
 The unregarded river of our life
 Pursue with indiscernible flow its way.

11. 38-40

The essence of man's self, his distinguishing life force,
 is a separate entity from his conscious self.

In his characterization of the nature of man in conjunction with the necessity for a separate self, taking into account the attendant isolation, both social and personal, Arnold formulates a theory of being. This distinction between the inner and outer life is established by confrontation of the stream image with the "hard lines" by which men are compelled to define themselves in the tumult of social life.¹⁷ The concerns expressed by the speaker echo the humanistic tradition within which Arnold constructs his concept of self. Stange points out that the conception moves beyond "Romantic self-indulgence to which Arnold objected, to disciplined, objective classical humanities."¹⁸

The objectification of the self is reinforced by the use of the nature symbolism in the river images. The choice of this aspect of nature exemplifies "the typical, definable nature symbolism of Arnold's poetry." The river-image and

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁸ Ibid.

the sea are meant to represent signs of a profound truth of life and death,¹⁹ according to Professor Stange. In this context, the poem bears out a fact of man's conscience and his destiny. In "The Buried Life" the river of life is not a feature of the landscape, as the sea is in "Dover Beach," but rather a part of the terrain, as it were, of the soul. It is to be noted that "the recurrent water images of Arnold's ideological landscape are so potent as to be archetypal; they evoke a range of feelings not involved with man's attitude toward the natural world."²⁰ This symbology is prevalent throughout Arnold's poetry and assumes varying connotations. The river is his classic symbol of history; the Oxus flows on near the climax of "Sohrab and Rustum," the Nile echoes diminishing life for Mycerinus (while confirming the truth of his existence), and the sea represents departed faith in "Dover Beach."

To return from this digression, "Buried Life" transforms the river imagery, representing the genuine self, into a linear image of concrete texture, and so emphasizes the ideological character of the organic symbol defining the character of the self.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 163.

²⁰ Ibid.

Despite the seeming futility of man's attempt to confront his hidden self, "airs, and floating echoes from the soul's subterranean depth upborne" announce its presence. Thus the image of self encompasses both the conscious and subconscious mind.

The poem has probed into the realm of the social world and analyzed its impact on consciousness. The dilemma of man's fragmented soul and perturbed nature, as he strives to confront the self, is resolvable. The prerequisites for such resolution include rejection of the outer-world's vices and submission of the self to the power of self-knowledge. A note of terminating optimism, reminiscent of Victorian hope, rings through the shock of recognition and comprehension experienced by the lovers:

A bolt shot back in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
11. 84-85

The subsequent lines, descriptive of the revelation, as it were, are themselves as stirring as the emotional experience that they recall:

The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know
A man becomes aware of his life's flow
And hears its winding murmur...
11. 86-89

As a realistic, viable metaphorical interpretation of man's existential relation to self and the universal scheme

being, the buried life concept is aptly projected through the river and sea imagery. Arnold's choice of this not unusual aesthetic configuration endows his "buried life" idea with dynamic, organic qualities which border on the naturalistic at their best. Consider the cascading torrents of "Bacchanalia," heralding the new age. In its ability to image the movement of human experience and the inner life of the individual, Arnold's river/sea construct is superior.

The unity of "The Buried Life" lies in the recurrence of the river image combined with the fluctuating grammatical person of the poem. The idea of fluidity is initiated in the opening reference to surface exchanges between individuals: "Light flows our war of mocking words"; the sadness of the speaker "rolls" over him. The poem moves from this personal level, with reference to the I, to a universal level using "the mass of men" and employing the pronoun "we." It progresses next to a cosmic level, with reference to man as humanity, but combines in this stanza usage of the personal "he" with inclusive "our," as the poem turns from climactic assertion of the river of life to resolution in the buried life.

In the vein of a dramatic denouement, the movement of the poem subsides. The quest terminates in discovery through awareness.

An air of awareness plays upon his face
 And an unwanted calm pervades his breast.
 And then he thinks he knows
 The hill where his life rose,
 And the sea to where it goes.

11. 94-98

While "Buried Life" addresses itself to the question of communication, it affirms the problem of alienation as a fact of universal existence. The inability of the speaker in the monologue to communicate with his love suggests to Miyoshi "a problem of self-alienation; for recognition of alienation from others is only another aspect of self-alienation."²¹ Though isolated, the speaker believes in the reality of the current of his true identity and is optimistic about the possibility of confronting his 'true original course.'²² Yet he, like the Victorian middle class, has accepted a self-imposed isolation from self as a strategy of secular existence. Ultimately, "the poem demonstrates that self-knowledge is not obsolete."²³

If indeed Miyoshi's assessment is valid, it is in terms of the conditions of human nature, established early in the poem and compounded by the external pressures of society.

²¹ Ibid., p. 193.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p. 194.

Henry Duffin confirms this interpretation of the poetic view of self. Despite man's desire to know and experience his true, genuine self, "his delvings are unsuccessful. Not only is there a division of the individual, but each man is divided from his fellows by a certain isolation because each mortal being is by nature an 'island,' through deliberate concealment of the true self from others,"²⁴ for fear of inviting indifference or contempt.

A self-imposed isolation of self suggests that a dual or divided self, if a personal necessity, is a social inevitability. Dramatizing this fact poetically, Arnold again seizes upon the organic image of water, combined with that of separate islands, to examine the position of man in relation to society, to individuals, and history.

The Switzerland series of seven lyrics documents an emotional, perhaps traumatic period in Arnold's life, culminating not only in statement of philosophical truth, but also in a step toward his own ideological resolution. Arnold's first visit to Switzerland, where he met and came to love the Marguerite of the Switzerland poems, occurred in 1852. Though the relationship was tinged with poignant

²⁴ Henry C. Duffin, Arnold the Poet (London: Bowes and Bowes Publishers Limited, 1962), p. 31.

emotion and high expectation, it failed to attain permanence.

Arnold maintained an affection for Marguerite throughout the more than ten years encompassing the production of the lyrics and endows her personality with ephemeral reality.²⁵ Indeed, Marguerite's depiction betrays the latent Romanticism Arnold strove to arrest in poetry. The seven lyrics of the Marguerite series, in their final arrangement, include "Meeting," "Parting," "A Farewell," "Isolation, to Marguerite," "To Marguerite — Continued," "Absence," and "Terrace at Berne," composed ten years after the preceding lyric. The first group details their acquaintance in a descriptive statement of experience. The latter poems are philosophical in their analysis of human motivation, isolation, individual being and life. Herein lies their relation to "The Buried Life."

At the outset of the first cluster, a precise image of Marguerite is painted. From the frequency of references to her in Arnold's correspondence and throughout the Switzerland lyrics, this picture evolves:

She had blue eyes; soft ash-colored hair; a pale complexion; rounded cheeks; and a mouth which readily assumed an arch and mocking smile...; she moved with

²⁵ J.D. Jump, Matthew Arnold (London: Longman's, Oren, and Co., 1955), pp. 31-32.

'pliant grace' and spoke in a buoyant and musical voice. She was French.²⁶

This illusory portrait of Marguerite is very useful in terms of the social truths that emerge from the concluding lyrics of the series. Where the sea's surrounding and isolating the individual is accepted with chagrin.

Arnold's conflict between will and desire becomes evident almost immediately, for, while he is attracted to Marguerite physically, a deeper impulse, his buried life, cautions against involvement:

Ye guiding Powers who join and part,
What would ye have with me?
Ah, warn some more ambitious heart,
And let the peaceful be!

11. 13-16

His desire, their separation and this cooling of emotion are depicted in terms of seasons changing, and signal the ultimate isolation later to come:

Ye storm-winds of Autumn!
Ye are bound for the mountains!
Ah! with that let me go
Where your cold, distant banner ...

11. 9-11

As the image continues to develop in complexity, depicting Arnold's attitudes, as well as approaching Marguerite's, on

²⁶

Ibid., p. 33.

the one hand represented as "sweet notes," the winds of departure," Arnold's will, are yet beckoning him. His indecision continues, yet a final course is determined. He uses nature symbology to dramatize attitude:

I come, O ye mountains!
 Ye pine-woods, I come!
 11. 33-34

Arnold relies on natural landscape to objectify his inner state, as he grapples with the self, as well as to symbolize the elements of duty and responsibility that constitute the real world. The poem approaches its basic theme of isolation, asserting that in life we are destined to traverse different courses, based on a deep urge within us which disregards even the heart in favor of the rationality of the mind. It is a message of the destiny of the buried self, balancing that of "The Buried Life."

But a sea rolls between us
 Our different past.
 What heart knows another?
 Ah, who knows his own?
 11. 13-16

Not to be overlooked is the underlying suggestion of surrender. The speaker, however, also raises a question of fidelity, feeling that he may not be assured of truth in Marguerite.

The sea embodies time, history, tradition, protocol, the self, a total experience, and in metaphysical terms, it represents the power of Nature. It is the Sea of Faith in

"Dover Beach"; it is defined as the "enclasp[ing] sea" in "To Marguerite — Continued." All relate to man's position in the cosmic scheme; it is the same medium connecting man with Nature.

Duffin interprets the water image as "a factor in communicating a sense of the character and quality of life, its meaning and its issues." It is an apt vehicle for conveying ideas about the progression of life.²⁷ One classic example of Arnold's facility with the device is "Bacchanania," in which he compares the approach of the modern age to an on-rushing tide with uncommon effectiveness. Moreover, water imagery is a primary tool of both the buried life concept and Arnold's cyclical theory of history. The two converge in the Marguerite series. Throughout these poems, sea imagery helps to establish and clarify ideas of isolation and disenchantment or abandonment menacing the characters. Approaching the discovery of his buried life, the speaker takes refuge in Nature, where the ultimate, steadfast truth resides:

Fold closely, O Nature!
Thine arms round thy child.
11. 17-18.

The isolation treated in the poem, a divinely enforced

²⁷ Duffin, Matthew Arnold, p. 39.

separation, is suggested in the contrast between the continent, holistic Nature and the tiny islands, which are man.

Early, then, in the Marguerite series, apprehensive distrust of men, of self, and of individuals is established, and therefore the isolation of men as social beings. Consequently Arnold takes leave of Marguerite in their days of waning affection. "Farewell" analyzes human motivation and argues for strength of will:

I, too, have longed for trenchant force
And will like dividing spears;
Have praised the keen, unscrupulous course.
11. 33-35

He defines the buried life as self-possession. Arnold assumes an almost superior posture and sermonizing air in his direction to Marguerite to seek out her true self in a world where even "love is rare."

Go, then! -- till time and fate impress
This truth on thee, be mine no more!
They will! -- for thou, I fell, not less
Than I, wast destined to this lore.
11. 41-44

The lyric foreshadows the issue to be elucidated in the ensuing poems, "Isolation. To Marguerite" (1857). In addition, an urgency regarding the role society plays in structuring the ordinary (outer) self, causing the cleavage of the individual as a whole, appears, and the necessity to secure

oneself from possession by the cosmic scheme emerges from this segment, "Isolation." The poet anticipates a time when the buried self, synonymous with truth, can be freely expressed: "We shall not then deny a course/ To every thought the mass ignore." Taking its origin from the material of Arnold's era, the lyric synthesizes the social dilemma of alienated Victorians in a society of false "pride, guile and spiritual want." Self-discovery, then, requires isolation and withdrawal from a positive viewpoint.

The fourth lyric of this series, "Isolation: To Marguerite," follows "Farewell" by five years, during which time Arnold and Marguerite are acquiring self-knowledge. The experience and failure of a relationship of the finest sensitivity results in the apprehension expressed in "The Buried Life." At the failure of the love of Marguerite, Arnold, the speaker, retreats into isolation. Again, as a result of indifference, a social vice, the true self, thwarted has been submerged. Ultimately he dreams of two human hearts fusing as a unity, in a plea for the unification of the dissident self in which the heart and mind blend in one, released through faith.

From a recognition of the inevitability of isolation at the personal level, the speaker proceeds to the necessary acceptance of its universal application. This is the sub-

stance of the "To Marguerite: Continued" lyric.

Through a complex figure of island and sea images, Arnold illustrates the schismatic cleavage between individuals, whether Barbarian or Philistine, laborer or industrialist, Protestant or Catholic, Christian or Agnostic. Within the various configurations of society, the discipline of isolation is apparent. Arnold clarifies the resulting conditioning affirmatively:

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Between us blown
Dotting the shoreless watery wild
We mortal millions live alone.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

11. 1-6

These lines image a pragmatic and empirical truth, and are an open declaration of the construct of life. Life, the sea, is peopled (mortal millions) by countless islands, separated (live alone) by the "watery wild" (time, human experience, sea of life) indefinitely (endlessly). Arnold formulates the self-time scheme through sea imagery to carry the isolation concept, a symptom of the submerged or buried life, to its logical conclusion. The poem encompasses the vast spectrum of existence and defines man as a lone existential being in a benign universe.

Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson, in their analysis of the cosmological scheme of the Marguerite poems, also point

to the islands as man's life; the continent is God, "Nature," (the whole — the one).²⁸ They reason, however, that the poem is not solely about the lover's persistent attempt to communicate, but, they allow, embodies Arnold's meditation on the common human lot, which even lovers cannot escape.²⁹ Agreed, the poems probe deep, and their meaning is bound up in the collective human condition.

In attempting to interpret the actual meaning of the buried life as it is projected in the image of the flowing stream, one must conclude that it applies to the force of a composite of values, ideas, and motivations which constitute the true character of an individual.

²⁸ Geoffrey Tillotson and Kathleen Tillotson, Mid-Victorian Studies (London: Athlone Press, Ltd., 1965), p. 166.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 161.

CHAPTER III

CONFLICT OF CONSCIOUSNESS:

A SPIRITUAL CRISIS

Concomitant to the personal isolation imposed by the economic and political structure of Victorian society was a spiritual and cosmic one occasioned by the retreat of faith. "Dover Beach" and "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse" record the frustration and anxiety experienced by Arnold and his contemporaries, who were confronted by the narrowed sphere of religion and the independence of secular activities from that sphere. At the heart of the crisis of faith were an evolutionary science, an advancing knowledge and an intellectualism which, in their questioning of traditional beliefs, dismantled the security of Christian orthodoxy and posed precarious alternatives to the general conduct of life. Fragmentation, doubt, cosmic alienation and despair resulted.

Victorians gave voice to their spiritual dilemma, as the correspondence of the period evidences. Substantiating his analysis of the Victorian "frame of mind," Walter Houghton quotes in his volume this passage from an 1833 letter to Richard C. Trench:

We are crushed by the spirit of this world, by the horrible Babylonian oppression... of contradictory opinions, strifes, divisions, heresies, and selfishness. We feel this spirit around us, above us, within us. It cramps our energy, kills our life, destroys our sympathy.³⁰

Victorian sensibility was inundated by a wave of impinging time-forces.

Primary elements in the historical thrust operating on Victorian psychology were the chaotic debate between mid-Victorian theologians and scientists and the emergence of conflicting dogmas and philosophical theories to challenge traditional beliefs. Scientific growth, accompanied by the deterministic theory of evolution, represented for many Victorians the greatest challenge to orthodox Christianity. Its reverberations were heard in intellectual and social circles. In reordering accepted views of the universal scheme, Darwin's theory of evolution, based on natural selection and the survival of the fittest, displaced man from the centre of an ever-expanding universe. Assessing the impact of science on Victorian thought, Professor Raymond Chapman notes that "the ideas of evolution and relativism touched both the historical and scientific methods, forcing

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The Lettres and Memorials of Richard C. Trench.
Quoted from Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 72.

man to redefine himself in relation to nature."³¹ Victorians were being "disinherited from their traditional faith sanctions.... Their ideas about God and immortality had been freed from theological dogma and thrown into open question with nothing to replace them."³²

Religion and morality were fundamental elements of Victorian consciousness, and contributed to the strength of the period's Puritan ethic and prudish signature. To restructure the cosmic scheme invited the spiritual consequences seen in prevailing doubt, anxiety, and ennui. The religious debate posed central questions regarding the discovery of truth, the usefulness of Biblical interpretation, and the validity of papal authority. It influenced every level of society, as seen in the identification of the ruling and comfortable classes with disbelief, the alignment of the working classes with atheism, while members of the intelligentsia courted agnosticism or deism or pantheism. These elements of a besieged Church aided in "the decline of socially reverent attitudes"³³ and the submergence of faith.

³¹ Raymond Chapman, The Victorian Debate: English Literature and Society 1832-1901 (London: Winfield and Nicolson, 1968), pp. 271-272.

³² Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 67.

³³ Chapman, The Victorian Debate, p. 272.

What was at stake, asserts Chapman, was the "ability of human standards of behavior to survive the loss of supernatural sanctions."³⁴ In the end a dissolving tradition of thought, together with the new scientific interpretation of man and nature, drove "sensitive minds into moods of ennui and frustration."³⁵

The unseating of the orthodox faith, with its accompanying truths, left Victorians searching for new standards of authority, as "Dover Beach" and "Stanzas" illustrate. The key to retrieval of spiritual authority for Arnold lay, of course, in his theory of culture, in which a state of moral and intellectual perfection exists, controlled by the prevalence of reason and the will of God. The authority of culture must first be achieved within the individual and then radiate out into the state, built of a classless society. It was not a popular doctrine.

Victorian retreat from faith produced that dichotomy of self evident in the intellectual confusion caused by the schism between the old faith and a newly-established truth. Faith in the abstract is synonymous with the buried life and the new truth of goodness and perfection yet to be determined.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 273.

³⁵ Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 71.

Historically, religious faith had been the central stream of the buried self of the social individual under the influence of Christianity's orthodox absolutes. It provided a basis of spiritual and cosmic security for men. While faith continued to play this role for most Victorians, agnostics sought a new or renewed basis of authority in new absolutes and ideologies. For Arnold, hope for a new faith lay in the stability of neo-classicism and the romantic allure of the traditional faith of the Carthusian monks, on the one hand, and in the restoration of simple honesty between individuals, on the other, as expressed in the final stanza of "Dover Beach." Culture, however, synthesizes what became the ultimate spiritual authority for Arnold. He explained the motivation for this critical, aesthetic position in a letter to his friend Clough dated November, 1848:

I have been at Oxford the last two days and heard Sellar and the rest of that clique who know neither life nor themselves rave about your poem gave me a strong almost bitter feeling with respect to them. The age, the poem, even you. Yes, I said to myself something tells me I can, if need be, at least dispense with them all, even with him: better that, than be sucked for an hour even into the Time Stream in which they and he plunge and bellow. I became calm in spirit, but uncompromising, almost stern. More English than European, I said finally more American than English: the forest took up Oberman, and refuted myself with him in his forest against your Zeitgeist.³⁶

The idea of disillusionment and general despair with Victorian decline of faith expressed here is the concern of the "Stanzas," and in this sense the poem relates to and reiterates the theme of isolation treated in "Dover Beach," "To Marguerite — Continued," and "The Buried Life." Arnold visited the Carthusian monastery in 1851. Work on the "Stanzas" was in progress in 1852, and the final poem was first published in 1855 and collected in New Poems twelve years later, according to Professor Jump's text on Arnold.³⁷ The geographical pilgrimage mapped in the poem parallels the evolution of Matthew Arnold's own thought as he sought to deal with the period's spiritual crisis.

The poem opens with the journey of Arnold's party to the monastery of the famed Carthusian monks. Well-defined landscape is significant in dramatizing their departure away from the present order into a state of past-time. This is achieved through natural description and references to the time, the season, and the environment (a mountain forest), which fuse to convey a sense of contrast between the present and the past. A precise lexicography in these preparatory lines of introductory stanzas further establishes place. Key noun-adjective combinations, such as 'stony forest way,'

spectral vapors ragged, 'Alpine meadows,' 'autumnal evening,' and 'boiling cauldron,' set the stage and create a tone of gravity for the resulting poem, as the party moves through the fog-enshrouded forest toward its destination:

Strike forward! cries our guide; and higher
Mounts up the stony forest way.

11. 19-20

On a higher level, the movement of the poem's imagery maps the intellectual confusion of the poet. With skillful economy, the speaker halts the party on the periphery of its destination with a sweeping directive suggesting a deliberate effort on the part of the journeyors:

Approach, for what we seek is here!
Alight, and sparely sup, and wait. . .
. . .Thou art come
To the Carthusian's world-famed home.

11. 25-30

This deliberate halting of the party's progression carries with it the element of indecisiveness regarding the total retreat in time and the consequent rejection of the present system in favor of a self-indulgent pursuit of the last vestiges of a declining faith. This was Arnold's quest. Romantic nostalgia the result. Patricia Ball, who in her treatise The Central Self sees Arnold as the transmitter of romanticism, and thus the link between the early nineteenth century and the modern age, speaks of two selves, the egotistic and the chameleon, as essential elements of

the romantic imagination. Arnold's Carthusian journey demonstrates the characteristic introspection of the Victorian period. The mind has been forced in on itself. Ball argues that the pursuit of the self or of knowledge leads to destruction, as Empedocles discovers. In "Stanzas" Arnold accepts "migration of the spiritual centre and gives his allegiance to the standards within," recognizing, according to Ball, "one profound irony of modern life: that self-consciousness equals self-alienation."³⁸

Matthew Arnold, then, is at the centre of the "egotistical imagination," not only in the emphasis he focuses on self-knowledge, but also in the conduct and structure of his poems. In 'Stanzas' place as opposed to character is primary. Descriptive stanzas establish environmental background and create a perspective of austerity, simplicity, reverence, and self-denial as indices of the monks' theology. The silent courts, the chapel where they kneel in stern, naked prayer, the severe cells with knee on floor and wooden bed, the library — all set an extremely external stage of gravity for the internal, existential "death in life" seen in the existence of the Carthusians here. Contrasting the stark living conditions of the monastery, suggestive of the sacri-

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Patricia Ball, The Central Self: A Study in Romantic and Victorian Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

ficial dying self, is the monastery garden of flowering herbs where the Alpine children, the other human element of this environ, are the cultural charges of the monks, hence wedding the living and dying selves and perpetuating the old order or traditional faith. They seem a deliberate human element introduced into the declining existence mirrored in the poem.

Confronted by this scenic chronicle of a foregone order, with its "pilgrim-host of old," the speaker seeks a *raison d'être* for his presence there. Arnold reveals his own conflict of consciousness by noting the divergence of the Carthusians' fundamental faith from the stern Truth of the classical teaching of his Rugby days.

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
 And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire
 Show'd me the high white star of Truth
 There bade me gaze, and there aspire.
 Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
 What dost thou in this living tomb?
 11. 67-72

Echoing Arnold's past and his present doubt and uncertainty of philosophical direction is a partial allegiance to mastery of mind, a classical rationalism. He compares his presence in the Carthusian world to a quest for truth. He sees in the old faith parallels to that of Greek humanism, admitting that though "... both were faiths, both are gone." The line recalls the retreating sea of faith in "Dover Beach." The

religious faith displaced by science, rationalism, and shrinking humanism is a factor in the decline of cosmic faith about which Arnold is perturbed. His attitude is one of dislocation, suspension, and loss. From a position of seeming futility, he visualizes the Victorian age:

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith my tears the world deride—
I come to shed them at their side.

11. 85-90

There is an affinity between Arnold and the Carthusians; both illustrate minority points of view regarding the spiritual and aesthetic self, the loss of which results in a state of moral disintegration and the death of the best self. The monks' faith symbolizes traditional Christianity and those elements of religious orthodoxy now challenged by Victorian non-believers drunk with Huxleyan science and Darwinism. The two worlds which Arnold views are the feudal past and the dawning utopian world of goodness, culture (in the Arnoldian sense), and collective perfection. It was a modern world Victorians struggled to achieve. Its arrival Arnold dramatically images in "Bacchanalia." The above stanza expresses a sense of futility owing to the loss of faith; the best self of society has been buried beneath the machinery of dissidence, religious dogma, and materialism. In its statement of loss and regret for departed spiritual

authority, Arnold's poetry reveals again its derivation from and extenuation of Romanticism, as well as his reaction against it, reasons Leon Gottfried. "For the thought in his poetry is naturalistic, his feeling is unclassical."³⁹ The connective elements of "Stanzas" ring a resonant, romantic note. The overtones of the dichotomy of the two worlds pose varying applications. In one instance is the suggestion of waning romanticism, in another that of dissolving Christianity. Arnold, then, was confronted with a choice between religious orthodoxy or "thorough-going naturalism." The two elements were firmly entrenched in Arnold's self, which at this point loomed irresolute. Unable to choose, Arnold bent his mightiest efforts toward a reconciliation of the two.⁴⁰ Gottfried's thinking suggests a comparison with the dichotomy of Hebraism and Hellenism in the historical cycle analyzed in Culture and Anarchy. Gottfried poses a plausible interpretation applicable to the dilemma of self and morality addressed in "Stanzas." Arnold continues his analysis of this conflict between rationalism and Romanticism, the emotional effects of which are expressed poetically when he deals with the alienation and incompleteness of modern man,

³⁹ Leon Gottfried, Matthew Arnold and Romanticism (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 207.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 209.

not only in "Stanzas" but also in "Oberman," "Dover Beach," and "Scholar-Gipsy." It is in this work that Gottfried and Ball, among other Arnold critics, believe that he represents in his thinking the main movement of mind of the last half of the nineteenth century, predominantly critical and dialectal.⁴¹ That it possessed the combination of "sweetness and light" Arnold advocated to cope with the spectacle of the ages described in "The Modern Element in Literature" was Arnold's hope. What is certain is that Victorian thinkers reckoned with Arnold's views, which stemmed from a spiritual-historical-aesthetic basis.

There were debates about the moral impact of art, the social responsibility of the artist, the quest for metaphysical truth, the advocacy of rationalism, and the consequences of intellectual doubt. Scholars from Morley to Mill, involved in the revolt of reason, were engaged in the spiritual controversy between faith and science. Arnold argued the cause of literature, society and the self, about which E.D.H. Johnson comments:

...Matthew Arnold, seeking to disentangle the moral from the theological content of the Bible, had virtually sacrificed his own mind. It was scientific empiricism to which Victorian thinkers were moving, the influx of continental idealism and Hegelian histo-

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 206.

ricism, and Mill's utilitarianism.⁴²

He concludes, "Arnold attacked not science itself but the philosophy which claimed that science was the only kind of knowledge that ever existed or ever could exist." And all who sought to reassert the permanence of human values on a higher plane than scientific analysis could.⁴³ One consequence of the chaotic spiritual forces of the period was a conflict of consciousness evolving from the great impulse of mid-Victorians to know. The broader the Victorians' base of learning became, the more susceptible were traditional beliefs to questioning. Pervasive introspection, uncommon historically, unleashed numerable alternatives to action, precipitated anxiety and alienation and drove many Victorians into themselves, having lost faith in individuals, philosophies, sects, and spiritual dogma.

Indeed, the question of faith is a primary one in the Victorian period. Arnold seeks alternatives to the prevailing scientism and its attendant empirical philosophies tending to unseat the orthodox religion of humanity. "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse" unveils the psychological framework of the crisis. The Carthusians represent the old faith

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E.D.H. Johnson, The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry, pp. 187-197.

⁴³

Ibid.

too, now beseiged. Neither receives more than a hearing:

For the World cries, your faith is now
But a dead time's exploded dreams,
My melancholy, scientists say,
Is a pass'd mode, an outworn theme —
As if the world had ever had
A faith, or scientists been sad!

11. 97-103

The spiritual affinity between Arnold and the Carthusians is expressed in the poem as a comradeship in belief. Vestiges of the former faith established by our ancestors yet remain in the ideas of both traditionalists like Arnold and revolutionaries like the romantics. The degree to which one heeds the echoes of a deep-rooted spirituality determines the solidarity or fragmentation of the conscious self. At this point Arnold sees little support for his position:

Our fathers watered with their tears
This sea of time whereon we sail

11. 122-123

Historic dimensions are given to the question with the entrance of the sea image, traditionally Arnold's historical symbol. Conveying his doubt, the poet questions the value of those suffering forerunners who possessed a faith:

What helps it now, that Byron bore,
With haughty scorn which mock'd the smart,
Through Europe to the Aetolian shore
The pageant of his bleeding heart?
That thousands counted every groan,
And Europe made his woe her own?

11. 133-138

Of what value now was Shelley's lovely wail, or Oberman's

"sad, stern page?" Reflecting his own firmly entrenched faith, the poet speaks of the future and the dawn of a new age of wisdom and joy.

"Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse" is a plea for the return of sensibility and tolerance for compassion. The new age is indeed in the offing, heralded by the transformations of the mid-Victorian age. A newness pervades every prospect of life:

. . . We admire with awe
 The exulting thunder of your race;
 You give the universe your law,
 Your triumph over time and space,
 Your pride of life, your tireless powers
 We loved them, but they are not ours.

11. 162-167

Clearly Arnold has taken his position with the authority of the past, as the second person pronoun reference indicates. This position passes into mystical alignment with his Carthusian brothers; together they are alienated from this progressive world just chronicled. The shifting pronoun usage creates an ambiguous effect by virtue of having launched into the simile comparing the monks, in their remote order, to the abandoned children, as the two become at one point indistinguishable. The dichotomy of philosophies re-enters the poem at this point, for, in yet another direction, the life of retreat to a sylvan green contrasts pointedly with the active involvement of an industrial society. At this point the poem

asks a rhetorical question of the monks, who are encompassed in the figure of the children. What direction will they follow? The direction of materialism, to the city, or of escape, to the sylvan green? It is a question of Arnold and the Victorians. Their reply is based on a feeling of alienation from and disenchantment with the cosmos. Temporarily they (Arnold) choose the life of withdrawal and passivity: "Pass, baseness, pass, and bugler cease;/ And leave our heart to its peace!"

If any answers are to be gleaned from the speaker's experience, one must be that Arnold was uncertain in the early 1850's, for he has not totally rejected or accepted the old faith. Clearly he asserts the necessity for some form of authority and offers one alternative in the intellectual and spiritual discipline of poetry. As a latent romantic advocating a neo-classical culture, tempered with a tolerance for tears, so to speak, Matthew Arnold is not totally of the past, but, in rejecting the *Zeitgeist*, yet with a mind to reform it, he finds himself wandering between two worlds.

The crisis of consciousness implicit in "Stanzas" points up the dislocation produced by the religious debate and reveals a divided self. In like manner, "Dover Beach" treats the theme of alienation and disenchantment produced

by the loss of spiritual authority and faith in general.

That the Victorian Age inherited the divided self from the Romantic era is a basic contention of the chapter "Will as Form" in Masao Miyoshi's book The Divided Self. Miyoshi theorizes that the duality of the self is created both by external forces and by internal factors peculiar to the individual personality. This is the crux of Arnold's dilemma in "Stanzas." The external forces are dissenting ideologies and the absence of spiritual sanction creating the moral crisis of the period. External forces necessarily include the political climate of liberalism and reform and the current social structure and economic conditions in the broad view. The impact of these forces on the individual produced a crisis of self manifested in the doubt, anxiety, despair and ennui usurping the psyche of Victorians.

"Dover Beach" is the dramatic epitome of Arnold's pensive contemplation of the inner-self reconciled with the outer. Here he lays bare the apprehensions and frustrations of the human heart confronted by a faithless society in search of a new standard of truth by which to govern all human history, and particularly those spiritual proximities which knit individuals together or isolate them. The historical moment of the poem, not defined, is universal and timeless. The speaker stands gazing out upon an undisturbed

beach where the grating roar of the waves, tossing pebbles, recalls the sound of human misery. This picture introduces the central image of the monologue, the sea, and establishes an historical framework for the poem's theme of alienation and cosmic isolation through lost faith as well. The sea image embodies both the human condition as well as the history of man's existence. In a broad sweep of natural description, the stanza draws the familiar Arnoldian landscape laden with symbols and moral meaning: "the sea," the "moon-blanch'd land," the cliffs. In the context of this setting of silence, the sound of the sea suggests to the speaker parallels with his spiritual predicament.

The placid sea, the speaker observes, summons comparison with the plight of humanity and images an elusive quality deep within the human breast. He directs his companion to the window observatory, in fact the soul; they listen to the roaring tide, a sound which brings to mind the historical "ebb and flow of human misery," which Sophocles had heard on the Aegean long ago. The sound motivates a further, more profound declaration from the speaker in the context of his contemporary Zeitgeist:

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.

11. 21-28

It is a bleak and yet profound image, articulating the intellectual isolation, loneliness and nostalgia which beset Victorian existence. "The metaphor serves at once to describe the ebb tide (of faith) and to suggest the emotional response. Arnold, too, is standing, melancholy, on the shore of the world, alone and unprotected from the chill nightwind of an indifferent Nature..."⁴⁴ "Dover Beach" speaks of lost religious and personal faith and spiritual darkness in a world of changing truths, one which worships the god of progress. The speaker regrets the dissolution of moral security represented by the religious controversy, and finally looks for hope to the honesty of his companion. Arnold here implies that there is hope in love, whereas in "The Buried Life" not even lovers reflected honest communication:

Ah Love, let us be true
 To one another! for the world which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

11. 29-37

Houghton appraises the clash of armies as an expression of the "disputes, distractions, fears of an iron age which

⁴⁴ Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 87.

not only make certitude and peace impossible but isolate the individual and so provoke the cry for the companionship of love." The speaker's initial statement is both a plea in response to the futility of hope in the external world and a scathing indictment of the times, which he describes in totally negative terms. There is, further, in the image of the clashing armies, whether Barbarian or Philistine, Agnostic or Tractarian, evidence of the conflict between illusion and reality; the age which 'seems' to possess Puritan virtue and goodness and peace in its infinite variety, "hath really neither joy, nor love, nor peace... nor help for pain."

Consistent with the preceding poems of the self, the revelation here is that even in the spiritual bonds of love truth falters. In Victorian society alike truth is faltering. The final duality between the external world of reality and the inner-self of sensibility of the individual reiterates the isolation seen in "The Buried Life" and "To Marguerite — Continued."

Miyoshi comments that the duality of self is created by both the individual and society. He characterizes this condition as self-duplication and self-division. The former, as in "The Buried Life," is an external manifestation of the internal self whereby the self remains a Gestalt, but concealed out of necessity. The latter category, self-division,

into which the speaker of "Dover Beach" falls, is a fission from within the personality, having lost perspective on the outer world. The possibility of unifying the self exists for Miyoshi, but owing to the conflict of ideas in Arnold's poetry ("Dover Beach"), "the unity sits alone" and reduces the possibility of man's experiencing his total self.⁴⁵

Extending and clarifying this interpretation, G. Robert Stange suggests that "the essential being is manifested in the external world" through the playing of various roles, none of which completely express the true being.⁴⁶ We interpret Stange's use of being to mean self. Arnold's image of ignorant armies bears out Stange's view, for Victorian role-playing is void of those sustaining humanistic qualities which Arnold lists in "Dover." In attempting to re-affirm his own reality, the speaker looks to the necessity for integrity and truth to prevail in the one-to-one relationships between individuals as a determiner. He rejects the possibility of collective redemption as currently futile, seeing society in a state of seige on the darkling plain.

This final image of the poem synthesizes the consequence of lost faith created in the perturbed state for the speaker.

⁴⁵ Miyoshi, The Divided Self, p. 193.

⁴⁶ Stange, Matthew Arnold, p. 191.

And we are here as on a darkling plain,
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

11. 35-37

That the loss of hope leads to moral decay and social chaos is implicit in the simile of the armies clashing on the darkling plain, blinded by a singular direction. This social battle, as it were, images as much the rebellious clamoring of the newly enfranchised English masses demanding justice and equality, as it summons up the more elevated intellectual contests implemented by members of the Oxford movement, for example.

The spiritual background producing the state of despair prevalent in "Dover Beach" is immediate and far-reaching. In Arnold's own religious thought he expressed concern over perpetuation of religious dogma, the idea of God, seen poetically as an extra-universal power, morality and emotion, the Church, and dissent. He saw extremism as counter-productive in religion and politics, and felt that poetry, as a mirror of life, could provide moral guidance. This was where his faith lay, in contrast to the orthodoxy being undermined in the period.

As has been generally suggested earlier in this chapter, the 1860's and 1870's were a time of crisis in religion. The disparity between religion and the attitudes of the age was

largely based on the opinion that religious thinkers were not in sympathy with the movement of men's minds. Organized Church structure was not altering with the times. "The climate of indifference on the part of the Church authority was itself reactionary."⁴⁷

The principle issues of the religious debate involved Anglican ritualistic Practice, the claims of physical science, and Biblical criticism. The conflict of evolutionary science and materialism with orthodox Christianity created the greatest test of faith, ideally exemplified in the bold claim of Huxley's assertion: "We shall wrench from theology the entire domain of cosmological theory."⁴⁸ In view of such intellectual dogmatism, one readily comprehends William James' concern that, while the scholarly and learned could handle such a universal upset, one could not be certain of the masses.

This was indeed a factor in the dissolution of the "bright girdle of faith which once encircled earth's shore. The attack of physical scientists and socialists on the authority of the Church in an era of advancing materialism created serious moral erosion. . . and spiritual doubt. An atmosphere of conformity, moral terrorism, and intellectual tyranny prevailed."

⁴⁷ William Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), pp. 3-4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

Ideologies, from aestheticism to Tractarianism, sought provision for the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs of English society.⁴⁹ This threat to the superiority of the Church of England resulted eventually in compromise, "the acquiescence of Church authority, and ultimately the entrance of "the impiety of secular control."⁵⁰ Clearly, pure religion, divorced from traditional sanctions, had gone underground in favor of a less autonomous spiritual structure. The old faith was retreating to the past with the Carthusian monks, becoming the buried self of a secular, materialistic, exterior society.

Vital to this interpretation of "Dover Beach" as a measure of the religious, intellectual, psychological climate of the Victorian period is the figurative tradition of the "Sea of Faith" image. Neither the sea nor the battle imagery of the poem were unique in literary tradition, notes Dr. Richard Gollin in his examination of the poem's figurative background. It is when these images were employed by Arnold's contemporaries, reasons Professor Gollin, that certain details were stressed not usually found in other writing. Their citations usually pointed to the predicament of men frustrated by historical tidal movements.⁵¹ Figuratively, then, the sea

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

⁵¹ Richard Gollin, " 'Dover Beach': The Background of Its Imagery," PMLA (1967), 495.

imagery refers to the personal and collective human condition and defines the spiritual predicament of the Victorian age — "the problem of faith and the infallibility of conscience as a guide to religious and social reform,"⁵² for Gollin, a neglected aspect of Victorian scholarship. Its organic qualities are appropriate transmitters of the mass pervasiveness of the abstraction Faith. The ebbing and flowing approximate historical progression, and grow out of that tradition which views history as a cyclical evolutionary progression. Here the theological influence of Dr. Thomas Arnold cannot be discounted. "Dover Beach" perhaps represents Arnold's departure from his father's stern teachings. In orthodox spirituality, mystical faith rested unquestioned in human consciousness; its recession during the Victorian period would likely be followed by a reassertion.

Examining the import of conscience in Victorian morality in his study of the figurative structure of "Dover Beach," Professor Gollin notes that Victorians accepted the existence of "a providential government" directing man's behavior. Recognition of conscience became for some the most profound evidence of this power. Such a belief was primary in Dr.

⁵²

Ibid., p. 496.

Arnold's historical theory of cycles, whereby "national states passed through various phases toward the realization of ideal political and moral conditions, reaching toward the ultimate form designed by Providence." The third stage provided for a democratic state in which the people ruled, given a condition of readiness the absence of which gave rise to spiritual poverty, depravity and class war. The attainment of this social posture was within the reach of Victorians. Dr. Arnold warned, according to Gollin, that

...laissez-faire morality in the State together with outmoded sectarianism in the Church were now combining to thwart God's purposes for England's entry into the third stage of social evolution.... A unified Church was an essential prerequisite to political reform, because only when men are united as a single Christian army can they avoid the fate described in 'Dover Beach'.⁵³

The sea imagery in "Dover Beach" symbolizes the vast, collective spirit of man, Dr. Arnold's united army. Its retreat, in the image of the sea's withdrawing roar, with man exposed on a darkling plain, epitomizes the confrontation of man's collective consciousness within the abstract boundaries of that mythic "faith" he once had encompassed, with new knowledge resulting in a division of self and the elevation

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Ibid., p. 497.

of new gods of praise.

In this regard the persons of the poem are particularly relevant. Sidney Feshbach approaches the dual selves present in "Dover Beach" through the love figure, suggesting that the speaker is addressing mankind through this device. In his estimation, natural man perceives the calm sea as "love" and hears the sadness of stanza one as "strife." In stanza two, cultural man hears "human misery" (strife), while religious man notes that the Age of Faith (love), once at full tide, has receded,⁵⁴ becoming humanity's buried stream (self). The three distinct, and indeed viable, persons are aspects of the speaker's total self. Consequently the validity of Feshbach's perceptive reading lends credibility to the cleavage of self resulting from the absence of a central authority. Victorian theologians and Darwinian scientists challenged the veracity of once-absolute religious truth cloaked in supernaturalism. This displacement of the moral stay of man's spiritual self left him eddying about in nothingness, wandering between two worlds of Christian orthodoxy and evolutionary science, awaiting the resolution of his predicament by the idealism of progressive history. Feshbach's, then, is an apt appraisal of the poem. His

⁵⁴ Sidney Feshbach, "Empedocleal at Dover Beach," Victorian Poetry, IV (1966), p. 273.

assumption is based on the sea image and landscape of Dover being contemplated by the speaker, with Sophocles representing culture and Faith aligning with religion, all of which is compounded by the personal psychology of the poet.

"Dover Beach" defines, once again, the predicament of the fragmented self, a product of conflicting social forces. The sea imagery Arnold employs not only maps the terrain of the self, but also captures the history of the collective self of civilization in its ebb and flow. Symbolically, the sea of faith imagery contributes to an understanding of the buried self and the concept of alienation, as it represents a thorough loss of spiritual and moral security in "Dover Beach." For Dwight Culler, too, the idea of the fragmented self results from the flowing of the sea of faith through the landscape (Victorian environ) of Arnold's poetry. The couple at Dover, find themselves alienated from the world, on a darkling plain "swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight..." The expressed confusion of the speaker, seeing himself as a participant in the action on the plain, affirms a divided self, to be united only through the hearing of the murmurs of the buried stream evidenced in overtures of love and statements of truth.⁵⁵

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Dwight Culler, Imaginative Reason, p. 12.

Arnold's achievement in "Dover Beach" he expressed in a stanza from "Resignation":

In a poet's eyes and his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.
Before him he sees life unroll
A placid and conscious whole
That general life, which does not cease
Whose secret is not joy but peace.
11. 187-192

CHAPTER IV

THE DIVIDED SELF RECONCILED

In a letter to Arthur Hugh Clough, his life-long friend, Arnold expresses his disillusionment with the dallying irresolution of the Victorian age. The 1848 letter conveys a critical positivism about the ills and/or tragic flaws of an expanding, democratic, materialistic century. Arnold's plea is for that harmonious acquiescence of mind which he had described in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," an assessment of the importance of intellectuality and sensibility to the critic charged with leading men toward spiritual perfection and with shaping the creative epoch of the future. The close of the letter reveals something of Arnold's cogent criticism of the era:

Our (the English) weakness is that in an era where all tends to the triumph of the logical absolute reason, we neither courageously have thrown ourselves into the movement like the French: nor yet have driven our feet into the solid ground of our individuality as spiritual, poetic, profound persons.⁵⁶

⁵⁶Letters to Clough, pp. 72-73.

The final imperative demonstrates Arnold's impatience with and expectations of the Victorian citizenry. That he would employ the French to exemplify a standard appears at first ironic, in view of the critical regard with which the English were known to hold the French following the Revolution. There were, however, certain affinities between the English romantic and the French Revolutionary ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. More important here, nonetheless, is Arnold's emphasis on attaining self-knowledge by a conscious pursuit of and submission to the directive of the buried self. Spiritual, poetic, and profound — these qualities define the parameters of the buried life as well as a well-integrated, aware, and responsive self. They hint of the ideal of perfection Arnold argues for in Culture and Anarchy. Through culture, a balance of the Hellenistic and Hebraistic aspects of man's nature, one was to arrive at the calm lucidity of soul and harmonious acquiescence of mind which Arnold foresaw as the essential need of the mid-nineteenth century. The letter to Clough, then, asserts the poet's belief in the power of poetry to transform the self through the moral and intellectual edification gained in the objectification of human experience. Arnold employs "poetic" to refer not only to the artistic product, but also to the intellectual and imaginative process from which it results and to the psychology of those possessing the mentality

which gives rise to creativity. Poetry thus could become the ultimate spiritual authority, replacing the lost faith of the age.

Reclaiming for man a center of moral authority was essential to the unification of his separate selves. At the individual level, one path to this achievement for Arnold lay in a position of affirmative resolve. The protagonists of Arnold's poetry reflect such a posture in arriving at a realization of the buried life, i.e., best self, perfected through culture. Arnoldian characterization provides important self-studies in the pursuit of the buried life. The final dimension of this investigation of the concept is the quest for self-discovery.

Several of Arnold's poems reflect varying approaches to self-knowledge, ranging from the quest for an ideal or identification with Nature, as in "The Strayed Reveller," "The Scholar Gypsy," and "Thyrsis," to withdrawal and acceptance, as in "Mycerinus," or the stoic fortitude of "Resignation."

A primary imperative of Arnold's buried life concept is the necessity to secure self-knowledge through moral integrity in the face of the shrinking spirituality of the Victorian Zeitgeist. His outlook embraces a secular humanism in which science and art are eventually reconciled — in

a balance of the dual selves of the buried life and the conscious self. As poetry becomes the spiritual stay for man, Arnold points to moral responsibility in the fulfillment of the law of one's being.⁵⁷

The political poem "To A Republican Friend" (1848) reveals the basic elements of this final dimension of the buried life, its resurfacing through quest or self-actualization. Individual cognizance of the purpose and direction of one's life must be sustained through commitment and resolute action. This Arnold both admired and appraises in "To A Republican Friend":

God knows it, I am with you, if to prize
Those virtues, prized and practiced by too few
But prized, but loved, but eminent in you,
Man's fundamental life;

If these are yours, if this is what you are,
Then I am yours and what you feel, I share.
11. 1-4; 13-14

The poet praises the virtues of purpose, compassion and honesty in his friend, terminating the lyric with a confirmation of the ideals exemplified in the friend's self-assertion and in his resolution to attempt to abate the injustices of the age, to combat its barren sophistries, and to relieve the plight of the destitute. Arnold re-

⁵⁷Robbins, The Ethical Idealism of Matthew Arnold, p. 42.

iterates his acceptance of these ideals and convictions by phrasing the sonnet in the subjunctive, a mode which embodies both his dubiety and commitment.

Political ramifications of this position emerge in the continuation of the initial poem, labeled "Continued." Here are the poet's revelations of a conflict within his own consciousness in terms of acceptance of the need which France admirably implemented on the occasion of its Revolution. Yet in him an undercurrent of hesitation exists:

Yet, when I muse on what life is,
 I seem
 Rather to patience prompted, than that proud
 Prospect of hope which France proclaims so
 loud --
 France, famed in all great arts, in none supreme;
 ll. 1-4

Contemplating the "high uno'erleap'd Mountains of Necessity" which punctuate life, the poet closes with an image of man liberated from the snares of selfishness and "left standing face to face with God." While the speaker desires consciously to retreat from responsibility, his sub-conscious mind recalls the need to persevere. The poet therefore establishes and affirms the existence of the buried self as a virtuous, humanistic entity of selfhood to be cultivated by the individual. The commitment and resolve expressed amount to a dawning of self-knowledge.

Intimations of the external and extra-human influences upon man's existence are suggested in "Mycerinus," the narrative of an Egyptian king who is destined to self-exile during the final six years of his life despite the just character of his reign. Nature's role is that of a higher order. The gods, like Greek Fate, dictate Mycerinus' destiny, and like nature they remain as indifferent as the coursing Nile. The poem questions the rationale of life and seeks to explain the "stern sentence of the powers of Destiny." The incongruity of Mycerinus' sentence evokes him to pose certain central questions: Is there any justice? What ultimately directs life? His plight in the poem serves to answer.

Though viewed as the stern sentence of destiny, Mycerinus' self-exile is as much an exposure of the inherent superficiality of his legal rule, despite his own veracity, as it is the imposition of a fate. Questioning the logic and justice of his penalty, the young king arrives at a possible resolution of his inquiries:

Or is it that some Force, too wise, too strong
Even for yourselves to conquer or beguile,
Sweeps earth, and heaven, and man, and gods along,
Like the broad volume of the insurgent Nile?
And the great powers serve, themselves may be
Slaves of a tyrannous necessity?

11. 37-42

Here Mycerinus recognizes his freedom through a higher

consciousness, that of Nature, symbolized in the flowing Nile. The image echoes the murmurs of the buried life in "The Buried Life." It is a higher order of self external to the hard, material limitations of life in the concrete. Mycerinus, then, as an existential man, discovers his new freedom and selfhood in exile and comes to comprehend that those who serve the god of materialism are themselves "Slaves of a tyrannous necessity." With this knowledge, he accepts exile with an informed resolution and wisdom. His departure into the region of the graves is a retreat from the external world (the darkling plain of "Dover Beach"), a forfeiting of the outer self in recognition of the truth of the buried life. In the rustic habitat of his exile, Mycerinus comes face to face with his soul:

It may be on that joyless feast his eye
Dwelt with mere outward seeming; he, within
Took measure of his soul, and knew its strength
And by that silent knowledge, day by day,
Was calm'd, ennobled, comforted, sustained.

11. 107-111

Self-knowledge sustains Mycerinus as he awaits his destined hour. Miyoshi conjectures that Mycerinus' plight is not necessarily ideal, though it does evidence the divided self reconciled. The character, for him, does not convey any certainty "Whether the Romantic hero was finally able to

make his point and reconcile himself with the Gods or not."⁵⁸ In terms of human reality, Mycerinus' comprehension of their cosmic function and his deviation from the values they represent is of singular importance. Clearly, in accepting his fate Mycerinus discounts the prospect of a return to favor with the gods. Discerning that they image, in the context of the poem, negative forces of the external world, forces that are destructive to the genuine self, Mycerinus discovers his identity with Nature, as the poem closes with the intermingling of the king's revelling and the murmurs of the coursing Nile. The final image documents the unification of Mycerinus' separate selves through a conscious recovery of the central stream of his being, objectified in the changeless movement of the Nile, symbolic of the Truth in Nature. Just as the scholar gipsy and the reveller are in active pursuit, so Mycerinus the intellectual comes to know his true self.

Arnold's famed elegy "Thyrsis," his tribute to Clough, details a quest of another order, a life-long pursuit of an aesthetic ideal paralleling Arnold's sweetness and light. Following Clough's death, Arnold returns to the scene of

⁵⁸Miyoshi, The Divided Self, p. 191.

their Oxford days to ruminate over the past in the fashion of the speaker of "Stanzas." The action represents a quest for a sustaining truth, a governing principle of the artistic life. Arnold's cogitations devote attention to the change which transforms experience and also draw certain conclusions about the life of purpose.

Returning to the Oxford setting, Arnold discovers the tree he and Clough had claimed still standing on the rustic English hillside. It is symbolic of an abiding Truth, one which transcends terrestrial life. The permanence of the tree philosophically implies that the ideals for which Clough stood yet prevail. Drawing upon the inherent meaning of the tree's longevity, Arnold comments: "Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee." The profound statement reiterates both the struggle which encompassed Clough and the ideal which motivated him.

The essential message of the quest motif in "Thyrsis" is the importance of that unrelenting search for the light of reason which engaged both Arnold and Clough:

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
 Shy to illuminate; and I seek it too.
 This does not come with houses or with gold,
 With place, with honor, and a faltering crew;
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold —
 But the smooth-slipping weeks
 Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
 11. 201-211

Though lamenting Clough's early death, Arnold admires his undaunting quest. Challenged by the strength it displays, he seeks to be reminded amid the forces of industrialism in the Victorian period:

— Then through the great town's harsh,
 heart-wearying roar,
 Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
 To chase fatigue and fear:
 11. 234-236

This reference to the urban scene contrasts sharply with the poem's foregoing rustic setting of fields, wood and hills. The necessity for Arnold to be reminded of the Truth Clough sought "Mid city-noise" evidences the strayed course of the period lacking a center of authority. The poet's return to the romantic nostalgia of the past, as seen in "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse," approximates his pursuit of the buried stream of his inmost being. The elegy closes with the voice of Clough beseeching Arnold to persevere:

'Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
 Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
 Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
 Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.
 11. 237-240

Though time has wrought external changes, the deep abiding Truth, the buried life, yet prevails. It has moved from the

realm of sub-consciousness into that of conscious awareness, as the upward-pointing tree demonstrates. Through the time motif of the poem Arnold delves into the psychological meaning of time and the quest for self "just as he explores the personal relevance of the eternal realm of myth which is beyond him."⁵⁹ It is fundamental to the concept of change inherent in the quest for truth which occupied Arnold and Clough. This search was a transforming one which gave power to Thyrsis and ultimately led to his perfection in death, "since his restive search for knowledge is, from the elegist's point of view, his 'rest.'"⁶⁰ That same truth occupies the personae of "Buried Life," "Stanzas," "Dover Beach," and "Mycerinus."

⁵⁹Richard Gionnone, "The Quest Motif in 'Thyrsis,'" Victorian Poetry, III, No. 2 (Spring, 1965), p. 73.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 77.

CONCLUSION

Within the context of Matthew Arnold's poetry and the nature of the Victorian period's social, moral and political conditions, the submergence of self, the buried life, is both a philosophical truth and an historical problem. In this sense, therefore, the logical conclusion of the question exists in the cultural doctrine of self expostulated in Culture and Anarchy. It takes into account the nature of being and its collective manifestation in the movement of history. Because man's best self has been submerged in preference to the machinery of industrialism and in favor of "doing as one likes," Arnold warns that a state of potential anarchy exists. It is compounded by the loss of a center of moral authority. To abate the collision course along which Victorians are proceeding, Arnold preaches the necessity for self-perfection through the transforming authority of culture. Culture requires the total integration of self, intellectually, morally and spiritually. Insofar as this selfhood must be arrived at through conscious pursuit, demonstrated in both the poetry and prose, there is a one-to-one relationship between the buried life of the poetry and the best self to be achieved through culture. The two are related entities of Arnold's social humanism.

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Culture and Anarchy extends the poetical interpretation of the buried life into the social sphere, as it argues for the cultivation of society's collective best self. It demands that the individual must not only acknowledge the buried life, but must consciously develop it through a spiritual awakening, an expanded intellect, and ethical awareness. The end of this self-actualization is culture:

One aid to man in the search for the hidden self, which in Spinozist terms fulfills his beings law and is, in the idiom of Arnold's later praise of culture, man's best self, is Nature - the grand cosmic Nature of time and space, of which higher selves are aware emotionally and imaginatively.⁶⁰

Mycerinus discovers it along the Nile. As the water symbolism pervades the landscape of Arnold's poetry, endowing it with moral meaning, the universal truth echoes in the flowing Oxus of "Sohrab and Rustum." Thyrsis' mystic tree holds a profound truth of life. Robbins' assessment of the self further supports the unity of Arnold's poetry and prose, which present a theory of being based on man's spiritual self. In Culture and Anarchy Arnold criticizes the Philistines for their need of a shade more soul to be arrived at through the authority of culture. The poetic parallel of

⁶⁰ Robbins, Ethical Idealism, p. 121.

the soul is the buried life, symbolically represented in the poet's river and sea imagery. This imagery communicates Arnold's vision of the power of Nature and man's relationship thereto. Culture, then, in terms of its ability to release the individual from spiritual poverty and to assist in his intellectual development, can give rise to the resurfacing of the buried life.

The buried life motif describes a condition of being symptomatic of the Victorian period. Its aesthetic study endows Arnold's poetry with special qualities of substance and form seen in the imagery and characterization of the buried life poems. Miyoshi concluded that out of his combination of classical ethics with an historical aesthetic Arnold produced a penetrating and original theory of being, most fully realized in the language of image....⁶² The organic, mutable quality of the river/sea imagery serves to define the movement of man in time as a social being, the character of the buried life, and the quest for truth. Through it Arnold achieves a metaphorical statement of historical man in the universe, while showing him in dramatic relief against the Powers of Nature. The poems of the self trace the evolution of man's spiritual self from

⁶² Miyoshi, The Divided Self, pp. 194-195.

a state of fragmented imperfection, seen in "The Buried Life," to the reassertion of the best self through the discovery of life's Truth in Nature, as in "Mycerinus" and "Thyrsis." In the final analysis one must conclude with Miyoshi that

The poems of the self illuminate the characteristic operation of Arnold's poetry. Individual works acquire extended implication when combined with larger configurations....(Hence) Arnold's poems have a dramatic quality based on the advancement of the action they imitate toward a definition.... The idea of self is at once a subject of Arnold's poetry and the problem which caused poetry to be made.⁶³

⁶³ Ibid.

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